

**IN GOD'S WAY: A  
NOVEL, VOLUME II**

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In God's way: a novel, Volume II by Bjornstjerne Bjornson & Edmund Gosse

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**BJORNSTJERNE BJORNSON & EDMUND GOSSE**

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THE NOVELS OF  
BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSSON

*Edited by* EDMUND GOSSE

VOLUME X

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LONDON

WILLIAM HEINEMANN

21 Bedford Street, W.C.

## MANHOOD

### III

THE next morning they were awakened by a loud and continued noise. When they could collect their thoughts they knew it was the church bells ringing for service ; they had slept very late, but then they had worked till three o'clock, that is to say, until broad daylight.

Kallem was out of bed in a second, and into the bath-room, next door, where he took a tremendous shower-bath ; evidently, the former doctor had had a taste for that kind of thing ! And hardly was he half dressed before he ran out on to the balcony to look at the view. He shouted in to Ragni to take her shower-bath too, and dress herself and come out to look at it ; but she had felt the water so fearfully cold yesterday, she lay there with wide-open eyes, debating as to whether she should shirk it or really venture to take it. She made up her mind to shirk, so she quickly appeared at his side in a very pretty dressing-gown, which she had thrown round her. But although she looked so sweetly at him, and eagerly began praising the view and the exquisite

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day, he did not forget the shower-bath. Yesterday she had solemnly promised that she would begin the very first morning ; susceptible to cold as she was, she must look upon a shower-bath as her daily bread, especially up here, where the change from heat to cold was so very sudden. Therefore——! She made the most piteous face, and tried to laugh it off ; but he pointed to the shower-bath—would she really break her promise? If she broke it now, this first time, she would break it too often later on. She kissed him and said he was cruel ; he kissed her and said she was sweet ; but how about the shower-bath? So she darted in and undid her dressing-gown, as though she meant to take the bath, but popped into bed instead. When he came in, she pulled the clothes over her head ; but without more ado he took up the blanket and its contents, and carried it to the door ; but she begged and implored him to let her off, and seemed so frightened that he went back with his burden. She put her arms round him and dragged him down to her ; she kissed him and whispered to him, and with her sweet caresses completely defeated his logic.

The bells went on ringing and ringing, carriages drove past away from the town. Hardly had one gone by before another came. The door was open ; every time the bells stopped preparatory to the well-known three peals, they could hear the flies buzzing about the room, and the birds outside. They also heard the puffing of a little steamer out on the lake ; they had seen



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it cut across from the other coast, probably with tourists. There must be some festivity going on somewhere to account for the way people were streaming in.

There was a light south-westerly breeze, filling the room each time with sweet scents ; it poured in from the fields and trees. Through the clanging of the bells one could hear it whispering and sighing, the air seemed full of sounds.

Shortly after, they again stood on the balcony and watched the people going to church ; well-packed carriages drove constantly past the church and continued upwards. The steamer came quite close ; now the train whistled too. They both caught sight of two swallows that were evidently playing with their own shadows in the sand outside the veranda. They flew above and past each other, the shadows on the sand imitating each swoop ; the birds wore down close to the sand and then a little way above ; whenever they flew too high and the shadows disappeared, they darted down again to find them. She whispered to him that next year they would put out boxes for them to build in.

They finished dressing and went down to lunch. Sören Pedersen and his wife had arrived some time ago, and had their meal ; they were now hard at work.

Then they heard that every one was bound for the neighbouring parish, where the clergyman, Pastor Meek, was to celebrate his fifty years' jubilee, and to preach a farewell sermon. Foot passengers had been on the go all the morning ;

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now came those in carriages; and a steamer full of people from the opposite coast. Meek had had this same living all these fifty years—"a truly delightful man."

Kallem and Ragni were lunching in the big room; but their lunch was interrupted by some one knocking, and in came a thin, elderly man, smiling and noiseless, with horn spectacles on his nose; this was Dr. Kent, who was temporary manager of the hospital; he came from there just now. They both got up. He had a soft, pleasant voice, and a knowing smile accompanied all he said. He sat down at a little distance from them while they went on with their lunch, and gave a short account of the patients over at the "establishment," and of the sanitary state of both town and country. He answered dryly and briefly all questions as to those functionaries Kallem would have to call upon, as to the leaders in town and parish matters, and those of the local government board he ought to know. The purest business matters became pleasant when spoken of by Dr. Kent. When his gig came to the door—he was going on his rounds out in the country—Kallem asked leave to drive with him; but Ragni at once did the same too. So they hired a larger carriage and soon they were all three seated in it. Just as they were starting, Ragni remembered that the piano wanted tuning slightly, and she asked Sören Pedersen if he knew any one who could tune at any rate for the present? Yes, there was Kristen Larssen.

So the drive began with an account of Kristen

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Larssen. Kent told them he was born up in one of the worst and most remote districts, and had been punished by the law for some trifling slip—he thought it was because he had called a tune he played, “the forgiveness of sins.” Kristen Larssen was an inventor too; there was a knitting machine much in use now which was his invention, and various kinds of tools. He was a cold man—cold as iron in the winter time. Sören Pederson and his wife were the only people he had anything to do with. And who were those two? He knew nothing about their “antecedentia;” she was from these parts, he was from Funen. They were both clever at their work; but people soon found out that they drank. The minister tried to correct this failing; he had grown attached to them from the time they had worked for him in his new house. Strange to say, his efforts were crowned with success; not only did they give up drink, but Sören became a most zealous temperance man and very religious; at last he knew the Bible by heart. It was literally true, he knew it by heart! He often told them how it was his greatest delight to make Aase hear him, and in some few small assemblies, he would repeat by heart whole chapters out of the Bible, while his hearers sat and followed attentively. The minister put his name down to get him into a Bible school, and he had no higher wish than to belong to it, but he expected Aase to be taken in too. As they did not agree to this, he gave up the Bible class and became unsteady again in everything.